

CLAIMS

1. A goods sales management system having a plurality of goods vending machines provided with a container for storing a plurality of goods, respectively, and a vending machine management apparatus for controlling the plurality of goods vending machines, the vending machine management apparatus being connected to each of the plurality of goods vending machines via a communication line,

wherein said vending machine management apparatus comprises time information transmitting means for transmitting time managed by itself as time information to each of the plurality of goods vending machines,

each of said goods vending machines comprising:

time adjustment management means for managing time as time information and making the managed time coincide with said time information managed by and transmitted from the vending machine management apparatus;

goods delivering means for delivering the goods from the container,

delivered-goods number counting means for counting an actual number of the goods delivered by said goods delivering means,

goods number setting means for setting a maximum number of the goods storable in the container in accordance with a capacity of the container, and

information transmitting/receiving means for transmitting a request for restocking the goods to said vending machine management apparatus when a number obtained by subtracting the number counted

by said delivered-goods number counting means from the number set by said goods number setting means is less than a predetermined number of remaining goods,

5 wherein said goods vending machine transmits said time information managed by itself as well as said request for restocking the goods to said vending machine management apparatus through said information transmitting/receiving means,

10 wherein said vending machine management apparatus transmits said time information managed thereby to said goods vending machine as a transmitter of said request for restocking the goods by said time information transmitting means when receiving said request for restocking the goods, and

15 wherein said time adjustment management means of said goods vending machine makes said time managed by itself coincide with said time information transmitted from said vending machine management apparatus.

2. The goods sales management system according to claim 1, said vending machine management apparatus further comprising:

20 response means for transmitting a response signal when receiving the request for restocking the goods,

wherein said goods vending machine receives the response signal from said response means, after transmitting said request for restocking the goods, then cuts off the communication line with
25 said vending machine management apparatus.

3. The goods sales management system according to claim 1 or

2, wherein said containers of said goods vending machines are structured to be capable of separately containing a plurality of kinds of goods in each container, each of said goods vending machines further comprising:

5 a sales management unit for delivering the goods by said goods delivering means in accordance with a selecting operation of desired kinds of goods by a customer after receiving paid money.

4. A goods sales management method, using a goods sales management
10 system having a plurality of goods vending machines provided with a container for storing a plurality of goods, respectively, and a vending machine management apparatus connected to each of the plurality of goods vending machines via a communication line for controlling the plurality of goods vending machines, in which sales
15 information of the goods in the plurality of goods vending machines is managed, said method comprising the steps of:

setting a maximum number of the goods storable in said container of said goods vending machine in accordance with a capacity of the container,

20 transmitting a request for restocking the goods and time information managed by said goods vending machine to said vending machine management apparatus when a number obtained by subtracting an actual number of the goods delivered by the goods vending machine from the maximum number of the goods set in the goods vending machine
25 is less than a predetermined number of remaining goods,

transmitting time information managed by said vending machine management apparatus to the goods vending machine as a transmitter

of said request for restocking the goods when receiving said request
for restocking the goods, and

making said time information managed by said goods vending
machine coincide with the time information transmitted from said

5 vending machine management apparatus.